

I. Tryambaka's Introduction

(Sdhp. 1v. 1–2v. 5)

Tryambaka opens his treatise with a typical invocation: 'Hail to Gaṇādhipati! Hail to Sarasvatī! Hail to (the line) of teachers!'¹ Gaṇādhipati, more commonly called Gaṇapati or Gaṇeśa ('Lord of troops'), is traditionally worshipped as the remover of obstacles. As 'one who causes an auspicious beginning' (*maṅgalārambhah*), he is invoked at the start of rituals or other projects. This is however a late development: Gaṇeśa is not invoked in the *grhya*- or *dharmaśāstras*. Sarasvatī is the goddess of eloquence and learning.

The text continues with four introductory verses.

1. 'Obedient service to one's husband (*bhartṛśuśrūṣaṇam*) is the primary religious duty enjoined by sacred tradition for women. When the daughter of the Himalayas (Pārvatī) realized that this duty was endorsed by her father, she put it into practice and so assumed the form (*abhajata*) of half the body of her husband. May she always show me how to follow the path of sacred law!'²

Śuśrūṣaṇam and *śuśrūṣā* (lit. 'desire to hear') cover a range of meanings and associations from the reverential (such as the Vedic student's ministrations to his teacher and the devotee's homage to his god) to the subservient (such as the obsequious services of the slave). With regard to women, it manages to combine all three and describes the proper attitude of the wife to her lord: obedience in matters of principle; diligent and attentive service in the practical matters of every day. It also bridges without difficulty the apparent gap between religious duties and daily chores: the wife's service to her husband in the home *is* her worship of her god. Tryambaka returns to this topic in his concluding section where he defines *patiśuśrūṣaṇam* in three different ways (see section V, p. 305). In particular, he argues that the term 'service' (*śuśrūṣā*) covers every-

1. //śrī gaṇādhipataye namaḥ// //śrī sarasvatyai namaḥ// //śrī gurubhyo namaḥ// //Sdhp.lv. 1.

2. mukhyo dharmah smṛtiṣu vihito bhartṛśuśrūṣaṇam hi | strīṇām etat pitur anumatam kāryam ity ākalayya | tat kurvāṇābhajata vapuṣo bhartur ardham himādreḥ | kanyā sā me diśatu satatam dharmamārgapravṛttim ||1|| Sdhp.lv.2–4. The metre is *mandākrāntā*.

thing that gives a husband pleasure; that there are clear parallels both with the son's relationship with his mother, and with the 'service' offered by the student to his teacher; and thus that 'obedience' (*ājñakaraṇa*) is included in the more general term 'service' (*śuśrūṣā*; see section V, pp. 312–13). *Abhajāta* is probably intended here as a pun, for *√bhaj* may have a variety of meanings: 'to obtain as one's share'; 'to serve, honour or devote oneself to'; and 'to take on the shape or form of'.

The reference to Pārvaṭī, one of the most popular examples of the devoted wife, recalls the story told to explain the *haritālikāvrata*. This 'vow' or religious observance, performed by women alone and especially popular in Maharashtra even today, involves the worship of coloured clay images of Pārvaṭī, her (female) friend, and the symbol of the god Śiva (the *śivaliṅga*). It is described only in the later medieval digests such as the *Vratarāja* of Viśvanātha, the *Nirṇayasindhu* of Kamalākaraḥṭṭa, and the *Vratārka* of Śaṅkaraḥṭṭa Ghāre (PVK V.i.p.144–5). The story, said to have been narrated to Pārvaṭī by Śiva himself, recounts how by her own devotions Pārvaṭī both acquired Śiva as her husband (cf. Nagaswamy 1983:46–51) and attained the honour of becoming half of his body. This half-male, half-female form of Śiva (*ardha-nārīśvara*) is graphically depicted in temple sculptures such as those in the Elephanta caves off Bombay (cf. Zimmer 1983:vol.II, plates 256,258;139). Similarly, in the *umāmaheśvarasamvāda* section of the *Mahābhārata*, Śiva reminds his wife that she is half of him, sprung from half his body.³

The image also reinforces the ideal oneness of the married human couple: husband and wife as complementary halves of one whole. This is a popular image. In the famous passage from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyakopaniṣad* (I.4.1–2), the primeval Self in the shape of a man (*puruṣavidhaḥ*) longs for a second: he falls (*√pat*) into two parts from which arise husband (*patī*) and wife (*patnī*). Hence their subsequent union is the reuniting of two halves. Similarly, in Śat.Br.V.2.1.10, the sacrificer includes his wife in the *vājapeya* ritual on the grounds that she is half of himself and he wishes to go to the 'supreme goal' complete. This much-extolled oneness does not, however, bear close examination. The Upaniṣadic Self, like Śiva, continues to identify

3. *mama cārdhaṃ śarīrasya mama cārdhād viniḥsr̥tā* / ... *tvam* ... // Mbh. XIII.134.9a.

with his male half, pursuing the female in her various forms for the purpose of sexual intercourse. On the human level, the oneness of the married couple means not the merging of two individuals but the self-effacement of one of them. In the *Mahābhārata*, for example, Gāndhārī adopts not only her husband's lifestyle and interests, but his physical characteristics as well: she binds her eyes so as not to excel the blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra in any way (Mbh.I.110.14). As Tryambaka's treatise on women unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that the ideal wife is one whose duties, purpose and identity derive entirely from her husband. In practical terms, as we shall see, this is what is meant by the oneness of marriage. For the goddess Pārvaṭī or the ideal woman such as Śakuntalā, the whole woman — as wife — becomes absorbed into half the man (*ardhaṃ bhāryā manuṣyasya*; Mbh.I.68.40a).

2. 'She who desired (only) to gain a husband's blessing long displayed the utmost devotion: (first,) because she wanted to show favour to the world; (secondly,) because it was advocated by sacred tradition; (thirdly,) because it was her father's command. (As a result,) she became one with the body of the Lord (Śiva) whose crest jewel is the crescent moon. May Satī, gem of chaste women, today grant me knowledge in the way of the sacred law!'⁴

Satī is the daughter of Dakṣa; that is, Pārvaṭī in a previous birth. When Dakṣa insulted Śiva by refusing to invite him to his great sacrifice, Satī immolated herself in the fire (Bhāg.P.IV.2.1–IV.4.34; Śiv.P., *satīkhaṇḍa*). Later, when the world was threatened by the demon Tāraka, it was prophesied that only the child of Śiva and Pārvaṭī could destroy him. So, 'in order to show favour to the world', Pārvaṭī set out to win Śiva: first by her beauty, and, when that failed, by her religious devotion. Eventually, Skanda was born and both gods and universe were saved (Śiv.P., *pārvaṭīkhaṇḍa*; Sk.P., *kāśīkhaṇḍa*; Rām.I; *Kumārasambhava*).

The importance of the son at this mythological level reinforces the orthodox view that the wife's main purpose is to be the bearer of a son for her husband's family. As Śakuntalā declares, a wife's 'wifehood' lies in the fact that a husband enters her and is reborn

4. *lokasyānujigṛkṣayā smṛtipurāṇoktyā pituṣ cājñayā / śuśrūṣām paramām vidhāya sucirāṃ bhartuḥ prasādārthini* // *dehādvaitam avāpa yā bhagavataś candrārdgacūḍamaṇeḥ / dadyād adya satī satījanamaṇiḥ sā dharmapadyā-matim* // 2 // Sdhp.lv.4–6. The metre is *śārdūlavikrīḍitam*.

from her.⁵ Sañi reincarnates as Pārvaṭī to give birth to Skanda. Whether for goddess or mortal, Manu's dictum holds: women were created to give birth (Manu IX.96). In so doing, they fit into the ordained scheme of things and thus 'show favour to the world'. In the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* example quoted earlier, the sacrificer finds in this the logic behind the 'oneness' of the married couple: without a wife, a man cannot be reborn (*naiva . . . prajāyate*; meaning both 'to beget' and 'to become an embryo') and so remains incomplete (*asarva*); by taking a wife, he is reborn and so becomes complete (Śat.Br.V.2.1.10).

3. 'Those sacred laws which, when put into practice, bring women unparalleled fame, greater happiness in this world and the highest goal (in the next) are here described so that they may once more be thoroughly understood. At his mother's command (*jananī-nideśavacasā*), Tryambakayajvan has gathered together those sacred laws relating to women and now proclaims them one by one as they appear in the lawbooks, the *purāṇas* and so on.'⁶

After *mātr*, *jananī* is perhaps the commonest word for 'mother'. The invocations and references to Pārvaṭī may also suggest that Tryambaka is here (and in the final colophon; section V, p. 317, note 8) identifying his own mother with the mother of the universe. A third possibility is that the queen-mother (*rājajanani*) is meant. This meaning of *jananī* is attested by H.H. Wilson, presumably drawn from the examples provided to him by the pandits of Calcutta (MW 1976:411; xi). Certainly, Dīpāmbā, the mother of both Śāhajī and Serfojī (both of whom Tryambaka served as minister), was a powerful figure whose patronage of scholars is often cited. In particular, she is known to have commissioned Raghunātha Paṇḍita to write two Marathi works on *strīdharma* at about this time: *Narakavarṇana* and *Pativrata-dharma* (see my introduction, pp. 20–2).

4. 'I have gathered together some of these sacred laws relating to women, those which have generally come to be considered the

5. *bhāryām patih sampraviṣya sa yasmāj jāyate punaḥ / jāyāyā iti jāyātvam purāṇaḥ kavayo viduḥ* // Mbh.I.68.36.

6. *yeṣāṃ ācāraṇena kīrtir atulā bhūyaḥ sukhaṃ caihikam / nārīnāṃ gatiḥ uttamā ca bhavati jñātum punaḥ kṛtsnaśaḥ // vārnyante janānideśavacasā samgrhya te yoṣitām / dharmās tryambakayajvanā smṛtipurāṇāḍau pṛthak kīrtitāḥ* //3// Sdhp.IV.6–9. The metre is *śārdūlavikṛīḍitam*.

best and which are for the most part well known throughout sacred tradition. If virtuous women put them into practice, they will attain a good reputation, unequalled religious merit, immediate happiness in this world and heaven after death.'⁷

Tryambaka begins his introduction proper by explaining why the rules for purification (*śaucācāra*) are examined first. 'For it is said that "if a man does not perform the rituals of purification, his actions will bear no fruit."⁸ In order to achieve results in other spheres, therefore, one must perform these rituals. This is why the rules for purification are investigated first.'⁹

It is not entirely clear which sense of *śauca* is intended here. In its wider sense, as defined by Hārīta, *śauca* is both external (*bāhya*) and internal (*āntara* or *ābhyantara*). External purification includes that of family (*kula*; due to a birth or death in the family), of objects (*artha*; such as the vessels and implements in use every day), and of the body (*śarīra*; in particular the cleansing of the body after urinating, etc.; see section IIA, pp. 71–4. Internal purification includes that of the mind (*mānasa*), of the eye (*cākṣuṣa*; i.e. not looking at what should not be looked at), of the nose (*ghrāṇya*), of speech (*vācya*), and of the tongue (*svādya*). In this all-embracing sense, therefore, *śauca* is the first path to *dharma*, the basis of *brahman*, the abode of prosperity, a soothing balm to the mind and so on.¹⁰

But this can hardly be what Tryambaka means. For the quotation he gives here reappears in his section on *śauca* in its narrower sense of the cleansing of the body after urinating and so on. Certainly, failure to follow the requirements laid down was deemed to

7. *strīṇāṃ dharmāḥ katicana mayā prāyaśaḥ sārabhūtāḥ / samgrhyante smṛtiṣu bahuśaṣ tatra tatra prasiddhāḥ // kīrtiḥ punyā sukṛtam atulaṃ saukhyam apy aihikam drāk / pretya svargo bhavati yadānuṣṭhānabhājām satīnām* //4// Sdhp.IV.9–2r.2. The metre is *mandākrāntā*.

8. *tatra [/] śaucācāravihīnasya samastā niṣphalāḥ kriyāḥ / iti vacanāt* // Sdhp.2r.2–3 (Dakṣa V.2; Sm.C.II.p.249. For the complete *śloka* (attrib. there to Baudh.), see section IIA, p.74, note 46.

9. *itaradharmaśāphalyasiddhyartham śaucācārasyaśāśvatvamxity ādāv ācāro nirūpyate* // Sdhp.2r.3–4.

10. *śaucaṃ nāma dharmādipatho brahmāyatanam śriyo 'dhivāso manasaḥ prasādanam devānāṃ priyam kṣetradarśanam buddhiprabodhanam* //Grha-stharatnākara, cited PVK II.i.p.651. Cf. Baudh.III.1.26; Dakṣa V.3.

have dire consequences. In Mbh.III.56.3, for example, evil and difficulty (in the form of *kali*) take possession of Nala precisely because he has failed to wash his feet after urinating. But if, as seems likely, this narrow meaning is intended, then Tryambaka is speaking somewhat loosely here: he does not in fact examine *śauca* before he has dealt with several other topics first. The principle, however, is clear.

Tryambaka's second point is that the rulings he is about to expound apply only to married women. He argues by analogy with the case for men. Three separate and unattributed quotations are produced to support his statement that 'religious law prescribes no rules for men until they have been invested with the sacred thread (lit. "until the binding on of the *muñja* grass").'¹¹

First, 'they (the lawbooks or lawgivers) place no restrictions on one's actions until the investiture of the sacred thread (has taken place).'¹² In Baudh.I.2.3.6, the quotation is completed with the explanation that, until one is born again through the Veda (i.e. Vedic education), one is on the same level as the *sūdra*. Vas.II.6 quotes Hārīta to the same effect. Secondly, 'before initiation, they (i.e. children; in this context, boys) may do, say and eat what they please.'¹³ This quotation from Gautama implies that uninitiated children are not expected to obey the rules of social behaviour or grammar, or the prohibitions on food and drink applicable to their elders (cf. Bāl. on Yājñ.I.15). According to the *Bālabhāṭī*, even if such a child touches a *caṇḍāla* or outcast, he need not take the ritual bath with his clothes on that is normally prescribed. However, Haradatta adds that such licence in fact applies only to very young children, those under five years of age, and not to the uninitiated in general who might (according to some authorities, including Gautama himself, e.g. II.1.6-15) remain so until the age of twenty-two. For the *Bālabhāṭī*, the crucial age is six.

11. *tatra puruṣāṇām ā mauñjibandhanāt śāstreṇa niyamāḥ na vidhīyante mauñjibandhanaprabhṛty eva niyamāḥ* // Sdhp.2r.4-5 (i.e. *śāstreṇa* for *dharma-śāstreṇa*).

12. *nāśya karma niyacchanti kiṃcid ā mauñjibandhanāt* // Sdhp.2r.5-6 < Baudh.I.2.3.6a. Cf. Vas.II.6; Manu II.171-2; Gaut.I.2.5-6, 10-11 (Ān.); Viṣ.Sm.XXVIII.40; Dakṣa I.3-4.

13. *prāg upanayanāt kāmācāravādabhakṣāḥ* // Sdhp. 2r.6 < Gaut.I.2.1 (SS; Ān.: *prāg upanayanāt kāmācārah kāmavādah kāmabhakṣah*).

Thirdly, 'once the teacher has performed the initiation ceremony, he should first instruct his pupil in the rituals of purification, good conduct, the worship of the sacrificial fire, and the twilight rituals.'¹⁴

'In the case of women, however,' Tryambaka continues, 'marriage has taken the place of initiation.'¹⁵ Or, as the quotation from Manu puts it, 'for women, the marriage ritual is held to be the equivalent of initiation, serving one's husband that of residing in the teacher's house, and household duties that of the worship of the sacrificial fire.'¹⁶ It thus follows that, 'before marriage, women too are free to do, say and eat what they please; for the rules apply only after marriage.'¹⁷ We may safely assume here that Haradatta's restriction of the rule to the very young would apply to women too. For, although Gautama advises men to marry their daughters off before puberty, he also rules that an unmarried girl who has had three menstrual periods may find her own husband. Thus, in Gautama's time at least, a girl might still be unmarried in her early teens (Gaut. II.9.20-1). The *Bālabhāṭī* merely adds that the licence given to the uninitiated boy is applied also to a girl, as long as she remains unmarried (with the implication that she would be married by the age of six). Since Tryambaka is concerned only with married women, he does not himself examine the question of exactly when a girl should marry. However, judging by the sternness of his remarks concerning the sanctity of a woman's *ṛtu* or 'season' (see section IV, pp. 287-8), we may assume that he favours pre-pubertal marriage for girls. Here, he concludes simply that 'the sacred duties he is about to expound are therefore to be performed by women only after they are married.'¹⁸

14. *upanīya guruḥ śiṣyaṃ śikṣayec chaucam āditaḥ/ācāram agnikāryam ca samdhyopāsanam eva ca* // *ity ādi vacanāt* // Sdhp.2r.6-7 < Manu I.69. Cf. Śākh.3.1; Yājñ.I.15.

15. *strīṇān tu . . . upanayanasthānāpanno vivāha iti* // Sdhp.2r.8-9. Cf. Mit. on Yājñ.I.15.

16. *vaivāhiko vidhiḥ strīṇām aupanāyanikah smṛtaḥ / patisevā guruḥ vāso grhārtho 'gniparikriyā* // *iti manuvacanena* // Sdhp.2r.8-9 (Manu) < Manu II.67 (with *aupanāyanikah* from II.68 substituted for *samskāro vaidikah*, 'the Vedic sacrament').

17. *vivāhāt pūrvam kāmācāravādabhakṣaṇam* // *vivāhānantaram eva niya-mānuṣṭānam* // Sdhp.2r.9-10.

18. *ato vakṣyamāṇadharmāḥ vivāhaprabhṛty eva tābhīr anuṣṭheyāḥ* // Sdhp.2r.10-2v.1.

There is a curious contradiction here. Before initiation, a child is considered—for ritual if not social purposes—to be equivalent to a *śūdra* (see Baudh. I.2.3.6; Vas. II.6). Since, as Manu and Tryambaka explain, the marriage ceremony is to be taken as the girl's initiation, she too is ritually equivalent to a *śūdra* before her marriage. The implication is obvious: a boy after his initiation and a girl after marriage are no longer held to be at the level of the *śūdra*. Tryambaka then explains that all the sacred duties he is about to describe apply to married women. But the next two quotations he cites (one on *śauca*, the other on *ācamana*) explicitly equate the (married) woman and the *śūdra*. This means that women are ritual *śūdras* both before and after marriage; the only difference is that they may follow their own whims before they marry, their husbands' afterwards.

But this is in origin a historical rather than a philosophical problem (see Leslie 1980:15ff.; 1983(1):99–100). In the Vedic era, the period of study and *brahmacarya* discipline was deemed essential for girls as well as boys.¹⁹ The reason is important: the *upanayana* of women was vital to the continuation of the *varṇa* system. Without it, all women would be reduced to the level of the *śūdra* and, as Hārīta explains, *śūdras* cannot give birth to brahmins, *kṣatriyas* or *vaiśyas*.²⁰ Although the actual practice of female students probably came to differ from that of males, the fact of initiation remained. Yama, for example, while agreeing that *upanayana*, Vedic education and the recitation of mantras should be open to girls, advocates that they should be taught only by their fathers, uncles and brothers; that they should not beg from door to door but only from their own homes; that they should not wear deerskins or grow matted hair.²¹

As language and culture developed away from those of Vedic texts, more extensive commentaries became necessary, and increasingly long periods of study were required to understand the

19. *brahmacaryeṇa kanyā yuvānaṃ vindate patim* / A.V.XI.5.18a. Cf. A.V.III.8.11–15; Śat.Br.I.2.14.13, I.1.12–13; Tait.Br.III.3.3.2–3.

20. *na hi śūdrayonau brāhmaṇukṣatriyavaiśyā jāyante* // Hārīta XXI.20, cited Par.M.I.ii.p.48.

21. *adhyayanam ca vedānām sāvitrivacanam tathā / pitā pitr̥vyo bhrātā vā nainām adhyāyayet parah* // *svagr̥he caiva kanyāyā bhaikṣacaryā vidhīyate* / *varjayed ajinaṃ ciraṃ jaṭadhāraṇam eva ca* // Vir.S.p. 402 (Yama).

accumulating literature. But whereas it was acceptable for boys to postpone marriage until their twenties or thirties, it was still thought essential for girls to marry in their teens. The effect was to divide women into two kinds: the *brahmvādinī* (lit. 'one who discusses *brahman*'), who was initiated in the lighting of the sacred fire, the reading of Vedic texts, and begging in her own home; and the *sadyovadhū* (lit. 'one who becomes a bride on the same day, i.e. as her initiation') for whom the ceremony was a mere formality just before her marriage.²² By the time of Hārīta (approximately 500 B.C.), the majority of girls fell into the latter category. The lack of Vedic training for girls made nonsense of their use of mantras, so it is no surprise that by the time of Manu (i.e. at the turn of the era), the initiation of girls was performed without them (cf. Manu II.66, IX.18). By the time of Yājñavalkya (i.e. the first or second century of the Christian era), the *upanayana* of girls was prohibited altogether (cf. Yājñ.I.13). At some point during this transition—in order to justify the marriage of uninitiated girls to twice-born men and thus to rescue the entire *varṇa* system—there arose the compensatory theory that the marriage ritual took the place of initiation for girls. This in turn lent weight to the idea that girls should be married at a very early age. For it was felt that the girl's 'initiation' (i.e. marriage) should take place at the same age as that appropriate for the boy's *upanayana*.

It is often argued that this trend was based on the belief that the increasingly long period of study was vital because even the smallest mistake in ritual or recitation could have disastrous results (e.g. *Pāṇinīśikṣā* 52, cited Altekar 1978:201–2). Although there is undoubtedly some truth in this, the argument is not wholly convincing. First, women are not the only ones liable to make mistakes. Now as always, men make mistakes all the time. In fact, after each undertaking, a final ritual is performed that is specifically designed to remove the sin of any mistakes made in the process. There are also special *prāyaścitta* rituals to cope with the problem. Secondly, according to *mīmāṃsā* philosophy, an injunction or prohibition is weakened if it is thought necessary to shore it up with experiential

22. *brahmvādinīnām agnindhanam vedādhyayanam svagr̥he ca bhaikṣacaryeti* / *sadyovadhūnām tūpasthite vivāhe kathamcid upanayanamātram kṛtvā vivāhaḥ kāryah* / *purākalpe tu nārīnām mauñjibandhanam iṣyate* // Vir.S., p.402 (Hārīta).

reasons. *Adṛṣṭa* rulings are always more cogent than *drṣṭa* ones (see my discussion of these terms in section IIA, p. 58 below). Thus to say that Vedic initiation and education are barred to women because they are more liable to make mistakes is to weaken the validity of the prohibition; no reason need or indeed should be given.

In time, the argument turned full circle. Instead of the absence of *upanayana* having as its consequence the status of *śūdra*, the *a priori* *śūdra* status of women came to be seen as the reason for their ineligibility in the first place. Now commentators had to work hard to explain away the all too obvious references to the *upanayana* of girls in earlier texts. On Gobh.gr.II.1.19, for example, the commentator explains that the term *yajñopavītī* cannot mean literally 'she who wears the sacred thread' since women may not do so; it must therefore refer to a bride who wears her sari draped over her left shoulder 'like' a sacred thread. On the same grounds, Śaṅkara interprets the reference to a 'learned (*paṇḍitā*) daughter' in Br.Up.VI.4.17 as a reference to domestic learning and expertise (*gr̥hātāntraviśayam*). When Manu declares that no sacred rite may be performed with mantras for women, his first reason is that they are 'weak' and 'impure'; his second that they are ignorant of Vedic literature (Manu IX.18; Baudh.I.11.7; Mbh.XIII.40.11–12). *Śūdra* status is now associated directly with the female state and only indirectly with the lack of *upanayana* and Vedic education.

Tryambaka evidently has a problem. In order to persuade women of the religious significance of their role, he expounds the view that the marriage ritual is their initiation onto the religious path. But as his treatise continues, we meet again and again the conviction that even married (i.e. 'initiated') women are ritually equivalent to the uninitiated *śūdra*. Tryambaka uses the first view to inspire women to take their domestic existence seriously, to elevate it to the level of religious ritual, and to discourage them from wasting their devotional energy on other (i.e. non-domestic) forms of worship. He uses the second view to remind women that being female is an awesome hurdle they must strive to overcome. The rulings on daily duties (*strīnām āhnikam*; see section II, pp. 44–245) follow from the first; the digression on the inherent nature of women (*strīsvabhāvaḥ*; see section III) from the second.

The problem of how ritual *śūdras* can give birth to brahmins, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*—voiced above by Hārīta—remains. The

solution is presumably to be found in the discussions concerning the various ways in which *varṇa* may fluctuate. A child's *varṇa* is defined by the 'seed' (*bīja*) from which it sprang; and not from the 'field' (*kṣetra*) in which that seed was planted (Manu X.70–2; cf. section V.9.c). Thus a *śūdra* womb that receives brahmin 'seed' produces a brahmin child. A man's *varṇa* may be changed by his own conduct. Thus Viśvāmitra, who was born a *kṣatriya*, becomes a brahmin through *tapas* (austerities; cf. Manu X.42, Kull.). A woman's *varṇa*, on the other hand, is defined by that of her husband: whatever her father's birth or her own behaviour, she assumes in the 'oneness' of marriage both the qualities and the status of her husband, merging with him as a river merges with the sea (cf. Manu IX.22–4; X.67).

Tryambaka's third introductory point is that 'the general rules (*sāmānyadharmāḥ*) prescribed for men are equally applicable to women.'²³ By this, Tryambaka does not mean *sanātānadharmāḥ*, the code of universal values such as non-injury, purity, truth and good will (cf. Kapṭ.I.3.13; Vām.P.14.1; Āp.I.8.23.6; etc.). The reference here is to non-specific rules of conduct.

Tryambaka's argument runs as follows. 'Injunctions relating specifically to women presuppose the widespread acceptance of general rulings (of which these specific ones are the modifications).'²⁴ He gives two examples. First, 'the wise declare that the purification ritual required of a woman and a *śūdra* is half (that prescribed for a twice-born man).'²⁵ This statement clearly presupposes some general ruling (such as Manu V. 136) to the effect that (i.e. after urinating and defecating) one should purify the sexual organ, the anus, the left hand, and then both hands, by applying earth and water one, three, ten and seven times respectively. Manu V.137 gives the modifying rule for Vedic students, forest hermits and ascetics. Tryambaka's example gives that for women and *śūdras*. Secondly, 'both a woman and a *śūdra* are purified by touching

23. *tatra puruṣasyoktāḥ sāmānyadharmāḥ strīnām api sādharmaṇā eva* // Sdhp.2v.1–2.

24. *tatra tatra sāmānyadharmān siddhavat kṛtya . . . ity ādinā strīnām viśeṣavidhānāt* // Sdhp.2v.2–4.

25. *strīśūdrayor ardhmānam saucam proktam maṇisibhiḥ* // Sdhp.2v.2–3 (Sm.C.II.p.248 (Ādit.P.); Par.M.I.p.230. Cf. section IIA, p.73, note 44.

(water) once on (or in) the mouth.²⁶ This ruling on *ācamana*, the ritual of sipping water, again presupposes some general statement (such as Manu V.139a) to the effect that he who desires to be pure should sip water three times. Yājñ.I.21a gives the modifying rule for twice-born men; Yājñ.I.21b (Tryambaka's example) gives that for women and *śūdras*.

Tryambaka concludes from this that 'rulings such as "he who, rising early, sees..."²⁷ which prescribe duties for men (in the technical sense that they are couched in the masculine form without any additional modifying rules) are in fact equally applicable to women.'²⁸ This is an important point for Tryambaka's treatise, especially in his long section on daily rites or duties (*strīnām āhnikam*, section II, pp. 44–245). For, in the absence of rulings specific to women on subjects such as what should or should not be seen in the early morning (*darsanīyāny adarśanīyāni ca*; section IIA, pp. 54–7), urinating and defecating (*mūtrapurīṣotsargah*; pp. 69–71), or cleaning one's teeth (*dantadhāvanam*, pp. 78–82). Tryambaka is obliged to quote passages couched in the masculine and assume that they apply to women too.

But what appears, in this context, to be no more than a straightforward grammatical point is in fact an extremely significant issue in the history of the religious status of women in India. First, let us look at the question from the grammarian's point of view. Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (one of the most important works on Sanskrit grammar, dating from c.140 B.C.) declares that there are five reasons to study the science of grammar: for the preservation of the Veda; for the understanding of the rules of modification or *ūha*; for the

26. *śuddhyeran strī ca śūdraś ca sakṛt sprṣṭābhir antataḥ* // Sdhp.2v.3 (Yājñ.I.21b. For the full *śloka*, see section IIA, note 49. The quotation is ungrammatical without the previous line: *hṛtkaṇṭhatālugābhis tu yathāsamākyam dvijātayah*. Following Yājñ. and PT, I have restored *śuddhyeran* (for *śuddheran*; plural to include *dvijātayah*) and *sprṣṭābhir* (for *sprṣṭvābhir*; agreeing with *adbhir*, Yājñ.I.20b). *Sakṛt*, 'once', as opposed 'to three times as is the case for twice-born men. *Antataḥ* is glossed either as *antena*, 'at the extremity (i.e. of mouth or lips)'; or as *antargatena*, 'inside (i.e. the mouth)'; cf. section IIA, pp. 75–7.

27. *prātar utthāya yaḥ paśyet ...* // Sdhp.2v.4 (e.g. the beginning of Gobh.Sm.II.163,165, see p. 55, notes 8,9.

28. *evam ca ... ity ādinā puruṣasyoktā dharmāḥ strīnām api sādharmaṇā eva* // Sdhp.2v.4–5 (i.e. *dharmāḥ* for *sāmānyadharmāḥ*). Cf. note 23.

sake of scripture or tradition; to make one's studies easier; and to remove doubt (*rakṣohāgamalaghvasamdehāḥ*; Pat.I.8). On the subject of *ūha*, Pat.I.9 explains that mantras are not stated in the Veda in all genders, cases and so on. For the preservation of the true meaning of the Veda, therefore, the study of the rules of *ūha* is essential if one is to make the required modifications to the sacrifice. By the seventeenth century, however, Nāgeśa's commentary interprets *linga* to mean not 'gender' as it clearly does in the original passage but 'the stem (of a noun)' which is only a very late sense of the term. This is evidence of a marked change of opinion between earlier writers on grammar who accepted the *ūha* of gender and later ones who redefined the term to exclude gender altogether. The effect of this denial of the *ūha* of gender on the woman's role in religious ritual is obvious: the majority of injunctions are in the masculine; the modification is not invoked; women are excluded.

Now let us look at this question in the specific context of a woman's right to sacrifice as discussed in the literature of the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* school. The earliest work of the school is the *Jaiminīyasūtra*, written perhaps in the second century B.C.. The earliest commentary on Jaimini available to us is the *Śābarabhāṣya*, written in the fifth or sixth century A.D. Śābara himself is commented on by three different schools—founded by Kumārilabhaṭṭa, (Guru) Prabhākara, and Murārimīśra respectively—all of whom probably wrote in the seventh century. The overall aim of the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* school was to protect the Veda from the onslaught of Buddhism and other heterodox systems by means of a detailed investigation of *dharma* as enjoined in Vedic texts. Jai.VI deals specifically with the qualifications necessary for a performer of the sacrifice. In doing so, it considers in particular the two classes of people that came to be excluded from such performance: *śūdras* and women.

On the former issue, Jai.VI.1.25–38 declares that since the *agnihotra* and other such sacrifices are mentioned in the Veda only with reference to the three higher castes, the *śūdra* is not entitled to perform sacrifices at all. Similarly, the Vedic texts regarding initiation do not include the *śūdra*, and anyone not initiated into Vedic study is *a priori* unfit to perform sacrifices. Furthermore, these conclusions are endorsed by Śābara and his commentators.

The case for women is somewhat different. There is no suggestion that women are to be excluded from initiation or Vedic study:

unlike the *śūdra*, therefore, they are not *a priori* unfit to perform sacrifices. However, ritual injunctions are invariably made in the masculine form. One question remains. Is this masculine form to be taken as a superordinate (meaning 'person', 'human' etc.) or as a hyponym (meaning 'male' as opposed to 'female')? Jai.VI.1.6–20 deals with this very point. The question is raised in connection with the classic injunction *svargakāmo yajeta* ('he who desires heaven should perform sacrifices'). The *pūrvapakṣa* or *prima facie* view states that since *svargakāmo* is in the masculine, the injunction applies only to men (*lingaviśeṣanirdeśāt pumyuktam*; Jai.VI.1.6). Jaimini, however, insists that the masculine is intended here in its superordinate sense, applying to the class or genus (*jāti*) without distinction (*aviśeṣāt*), always of course excepting the *śūdra*. Thus women are also entitled to perform sacrifices (Jai.VI.1.8).

Let us take a closer look at the views of Jaimini's opponents. They base their exclusion of women from sacrifice on two grounds: first, on the denial of the *ūha* of gender; secondly, on the assertion that the performer of sacrifice must possess property which, according to them, a woman is unable to do. The latter point is supported by statements (e.g. *Manu* VIII.416; see p. 277, note 10) that a woman cannot possess anything because what is hers belongs to her husband or father (cf. Tryambaka's comments on this topic in section IV, pp. 277–80 below). Moreover, she herself belongs to husband or father and is thus 'on the same level as property' (*strīnām dravyaiḥ samānayogitvāt*; Jai.VI.1.10). Here Vedic texts are quoted describing the 'selling' of a woman by her father to her husband (presumably in the *ārṣa* form of marriage according to which the groom presents the bride's father with a cow and a bull; cf. PVK II.i.516–26; Menski 1984: § 2.5.5.). For the exponents of this view, therefore, religious capacity depends on social position, specifically on the possession of wealth which is denied to women (Jai.VI.1.10–12).

For Jaimini, however, social position is subordinated to religious aspiration which, he claims, is as strong in a woman as in a man (*phalotsāhaviśeṣāt*; Jai.VI.1.13). His argument runs as follows. First, the crucial text must be interpreted according to the *ūha* of gender to read: 'If a woman truly desires heaven then she too should sacrifice.' She should therefore proceed to acquire the necessary wealth (e.g. by spinning, cooking, etc., or by means of property received at marriage; cf. pp. 277–80) in order to perform the sacrifice

(Śab.VI.1.13). Secondly, since this injunction is from the Veda (which for the *pūrvamīmāṃsaka* is *śruti*; i.e. uncreated and eternally valid), it automatically overrules any *smṛti* statement to the contrary (such as *Manu* VIII.416 cited above). Thirdly, statements to the effect that a woman owns no property, being non-injunctive, are mere *arthavāda* (i.e. exaggerated descriptions): they should therefore be interpreted in the more liberal, non-literal sense that a woman should not behave as if she were independent of her husband. If they were meant to be taken literally, then they would contradict the equally valid Vedic text declaring that the wife is mistress of the household property (Jai.VI.1.16; Śab.). Finally, Jaimini argues that marriage is a purely religious function and so cannot be considered a sale in the ordinary sense of the word. This, he claims, is shown by the fact that normally the price of an object fluctuates according to the value of that object, whereas the formal gift from husband to father (i.e. in the *ārṣa* form of marriage) remains the same regardless of the 'quality' of the bride (Jai.VI.1.15–19).

In the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* texts, such arguments win the day. For our purposes, however, the arguments of the *pūrvapakṣin* are of greater interest. For they provide the basis for the swing away from the religious freedom of women. In particular, the *ūha* of gender is increasingly ignored and ritual texts are more often taken to apply only to men. In all kinds of ritual contexts, the male is invariably taken as the paradigm. When meditations are given on the body or when directions are given for ritual ablutions (e.g. in the *Jayā-khyasamhitā*), it is always the male body that is described. In theory, a woman can invoke the *ūha* of gender; in practice, it is assumed that ritual information is really intended for the male.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that by the eighteenth century, orthodox religion excludes women from virtually all ritual activities. What is interesting is that Tryambaka feels free to invoke the *ūha* of gender when it suits him to do so without any fear of the logical consequences. Presumably by the time he was writing, the issue debated with such feeling by Jaimini and Śabara had been forgotten. The question of whether the *ūha* of gender might be invoked in ritual contexts is now too ludicrous to be considered. In his detailed analysis of the daily duties implied by a woman's religious role (*strīnām āhnikam*; see, pp. 44–245), and in the brief section on things to be avoided (*varjanīyāḥ*; see section IV, pp. 274–6), Tryambaka leaves no room for doubt.

II. The Daily Duties of Women

(*strīṇām āhnikam*; Sdhp. 2v. 5–21r.3)

'Now the daily duties of women are examined.'¹

The daily practice of the orthodox Hindu householder (male) is an important topic of *dharmaśāstra*, described in detail in numerous *smṛtis*, *purāṇas* and digests (e.g. Gaut.I.5, 1.9; Āp.II.1.1–II.4.9; Yājñ.I.96–127; Mār.P.29–30,34; Kūrm.P.II.18–19; Sm.C.I.p.88–232; Sm.A. p.18–48; etc.). For of all the *āśramas*—Vedic student (*brahmacarya*), householder (*gṛhastha*), forest hermit (*vānaprastha*), and renouncer or ascetic (*saṃnyāsin*, *yati*, etc.)—that of householder is repeatedly described as the best.

The *āśrama* theory, examined in detail by Olivelle (1974; 1978; 1984), involves a gradual progression through three main stages of development. In the first, only the householder state receives wholehearted recommendation. The second encourages the notion of a choice between four separate and permanent states (*vikalpa*, 'alternative'). The third regards the four *āśramas* as a continuous series of temporary states (*samuccaya*, 'together'; i.e. in sequence in one lifetime). In all three versions of the theory, however, the householder state is held to be the best.

The earliest exposition of the *āśrama* theory is presented by Gautama and Baudhāyana. (For an analysis of the corrupt text into 'Proto-' and 'Deutero-Baudhāyana', see Olivelle 1984.) Gautama notes the idea of a choice in the form of a *pūrvapakṣa* (*āśramavikalpam*; Gaut.I.3.1–2), without approval. For, in Gautama's view, the householder is quite literally the source (*yonī*) of the other three: only he produces children (*aprajanatvād itareṣām*, Gaut. I.3.3; cf. Rāgh. on Manu VI.87; Baudh.II.6.11.27). Moreover, the order of householder is the one explicitly enjoined (*pratyakṣavidhānād*; Gaut.I.4.35) in all the Vedas, *dharmaśāstras*, *itihāsas* and *purāṇas* (Har. on Gaut.I.4.35). Baudhāyana even denies that there is a choice. The notion of four alternative paths is dismissed as a misunderstanding (Baudh.II.6.11.9) or the invention of a demon (Baudh.II.6.11.28). Baudhāyana stresses the importance of family

life; the payment of the three debts (to the seers by study, to the gods by sacrifice, to the ancestors by sons); and thus the urgent need to produce children (Baudh.II.6.11.33–4).

The next stage in the development of the *āśrama* theory is shown in the views of Āpastamba and Vasiṣṭha. The four orders are now seen to be equally valid in the sense that one may attain liberation through any one of them (Āp.II.9.21.1–2), but they are still mutually exclusive and permanent. (It is important to distinguish here between studentship as a temporary first stage and perpetual studentship as a permanent state of celibacy; cf. Olivelle 1984:85.) Nonetheless, Āpastamba devotes a large number of *sūtras* to proving that the householder state is superior to any of the celibate alternatives (Āp.II.9.23.3 ff.).

The third stage may be found in Manu, Yājñavalkya and the later *smṛtis*. The *āśramas* are now no longer alternative states but successive stages, each leading to the next in a steady progression towards liberation (Manu IV.1, VI.33). But still the householder stage is best (Manu III.77–8, VI.89–90). This remarkably persistent eulogy of the householder underlines the fact that all *dharmaśāstrins* are, of course, householders themselves.

In order to fulfil his significant part in the scheme of things, the householder must observe a clearly defined timetable of ritual and quasi-ritual activities, all included under the general heading of *gṛhasthadharma*, the ordained rites and duties of the householder.

The day is sometimes divided into two (*pūrvāhṇa*, 'before noon', and *aparāhṇa*, 'afternoon'); or three (*prātaḥsavana*, 'morning', *mādhyandinasavana*, 'midday', and *trītyasavana*, 'evening', corresponding to the three pressings of *soma*); or five (*prātaḥ* or *udaya*, 'dawn', *saṃgava*, 'morning', i.e. when the cows are collected for milking, *mādhyandina* or *madhyāhṇa*, 'midday', *aparāhṇa*, 'afternoon', and *sāyam*, *sāyāhṇa* or *astagamana*, 'evening'). Most commonly, however, the division is into four parts (*pūrvāhṇa*, *madhyāhṇa*, *aparāhṇa*, *sāyāhṇa*), further subdivided into eight: that is, sixteen divisions covering the twenty-four hours of day and night (e.g. Dakṣa II.4–5; Kauṭ.I.19; Kāty. quoted by Apar. on Yājñ.II.1; and even Vidyārṇava's twentieth-century presentation of the *āhnikā* rules, 1979:1). The normal unit of calculation is thus one and a half hours.

With regard to the different *varṇas*, no specific *āhnikā* rules are laid down for the *vaiśya* or *śūdra*. These men would presumably

1. *tatra strīṇām āhnikam nirūpyate* // Sdhp.2v.5.

adjust the *āhnika* rules prescribed for brahmin householders to suit themselves. The *āhnika* rules for a king are given in detail in Kaut. I.19 (cf. also Manu VII. 145–7, 151–4, 216–26; Yājñ. I.327–33). In the first part of the day (6.00–7.30 a.m.), the king should attend to matters of defence, income and expenditure; in the second (7.30–9.00 a.m.), he should consider the affairs of the people; in the third (9.00–10.30 a.m.), he should bathe, eat and study the Veda; in the fourth (10.30–12.00 noon), he should receive revenue and assign tasks; in the fifth (12.00–1.30 p.m.), he should consult his ministers and consider the secret information brought by spies; in the sixth (1.30–3.00 p.m.), he may amuse himself; in the seventh (3.00–4.30 p.m.), he should review his army; in the eighth (4.30–6.00 p.m.), he should confer with his commander-in-chief. At the end of the day, he should perform the evening *samdhya* (V.9–17). In the first part of the night (6.00–7.30 p.m.), he should consult his secret agents; in the second (7.30–9.00 p.m.), he should bathe, eat and study; in the third (9.00–10.30 p.m.), he should enter his bedchamber; in the fourth and fifth (10.30 p.m.–1.30 a.m.), he should sleep; in the sixth (1.30–3.00 a.m.), he should wake and contemplate the *śāstra* (i.e. of politics) and the duties of the coming day; in the seventh (3.00–4.30 a.m.), he should meet with his councillors and send out secret agents; and in the eighth (4.30–6.00 a.m.), he should receive blessings from his priests, see his doctor, chief cook and astrologer, perform the appropriate rituals, and go to court (v.18–24). Alternatively, as Kautīlyā adds (thereby undermining the entire system), the king may divide his days and nights as he needs (v.25).

Although Tryambaka probably intended his treatise for the edification of the women at court (who were presumably of largely *ksatriya* families), the *āhnika* rules it prescribes for women have little in common with the rulings given above for their king. It is thus more appropriate to compare Tryambaka's rulings for women with those prescribed for brahmin householders.

Dakṣa, for example, also divides the day into eight parts (II.4–5). For practical purposes, the day's timetable begins in the last division of the night (i.e. 4.30–6.00 a.m.) when a man should wake, perform the necessary ablutions and the *ācamana* ritual, clean his teeth, bathe, and observe the twilight rituals (*samdhya*). In the first division of the day (6.00–7.30 a.m.), he should worship his special deity and pay homage to his teacher. In the second (7.30–9.00 a.m.), he should study the Veda. In the third (9.00–10.30 a.m.), he should work for the maintenance of his family, following only

those professions permitted to his *varṇa*. In the fourth (10.30–12.00 noon), he should bathe and perform the midday *samdhya*. In the fifth (12.00–1.30 p.m.), he should perform the five great sacrifices (*pañca mahāyajñāḥ*): to *brahman* (*brahmayajña*, by the study or recitation of the Veda), to the gods (*devayajña*, by ritual offerings into the fire), to the ancestors (*pitryajña*, by the ritual of *tarpaṇa*), to all beings (*bhūtajajña*, by *bali* offerings), and to men (*manuṣ-yayajña*, by offering hospitality to guests). These five observances absolve the householder of the five types of sin committed every day in the home (cf. Manu III.68–71; Viṣ.Sm.59.19–20 etc.). In the fifth part of the day, the householder should also take his main (midday) meal. In the sixth and seventh (1.30–4.30 p.m.), he should study secular literature (epics, *purāṇa* and so on). In the eighth (4.30–6.00 p.m.), he may receive or visit friends and perform the evening *samdhya* rituals. From 6.00 p.m. until 9.00 p.m., he should attend to the duties omitted during the day and spend time with his family. From 9.00 p.m. until 4.30 a.m., he may take rest (Dakṣa II; Vidyārṇava 1979:1–2).

Let us compare these typical basic divisions with the daily timetable prescribed for women by Tryambaka. The first point to notice is that Tryambaka divides the night (and presumably the day as well) into six parts instead of the usual eight (Sdhp.2v.8). This ruling is not specific to women, for the quotation cited is addressed to the householder 'together with his wife' (*patnyā saha*). For Tryambaka then, the unit of calculation is two hours instead of one and a half. However, since Tryambaka rarely specifies the exact times or periods during which a particular duty should be performed, Figure 6 contains a rough timetable demonstrating the parallels between a woman's day as he describes it and that of a (brahmin) man as described in *smṛti* literature in general.

A large proportion of the *āhnika* rulings cover activities to be carried out in the last division of night. In addition to most of the duties prescribed for men, a woman must also prepare the day's quota of rice or millet, sweep the house and smear it with cow-dung, perform the ritual of threshold worship, and attend to the cows. When her husband performs the morning fire sacrifice, she assists him. At dawn, she makes an offering to the sun. In the morning, while her husband studies the Veda and works at his profession, she attends to her household duties. At midday, when he performs the five great sacrifices, she assists him. When he eats, she serves him, eating what he leaves. After the meal, while he studies the

Topics discussed in relation to women Equivalent topics for men

Before dawn

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. waking | waking |
| 2. housework (grinding grain etc.) | |
| 3. ablutions | ablutions |

At dawn

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. fire worship | fire sacrifice |
| 2. offering water to the sun | samdhya ritual |
| | worship of special deity |

Topics discussed in relation to women Equivalent topics for men

Day

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. paying respect to elders | homage to teacher |
| 2. housework | Vedic study |
| | work for maintenance of family |
| | bath and samdhya |
| 3. midday rituals: | pañca mahāyajñāḥ (i.e. Vedic |
| devapūjā | recitation to brahman; |
| vaiśvadevapūjā | sacrifice to the gods; |
| atithipūjā | tarpana for the ancestors; |
| | bali offerings for all |
| | beings; atithipūjā) |
| | midday meal |
| 4. meal time duties: | |
| serving at meals, | |
| bali offering, | study of epics, purāṇa, |
| clearing away, | visiting friends, etc. |
| housework, etc. | |

Evening

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. fire worship, etc. | evening samdhya |
| 2. going to bed and intercourse | |

Figure 6. Parallel timetable for women and men

epics and *purāṇas*, she clears away the meal, washes, sweeps and cleans. In the evening, while he is visiting friends, she is still doing housework, for the food for the evening meal must be prepared afresh. At the evening sacrifice, she assists him again. Her final *āhnikā* duties concern going to bed and sexual intercourse. Several of these duties are beautifully illustrated in two palm-leaf manuscripts in the British Library collection: milking the cows, cooking, serving food to her husband, tending her children, nursing an infant, massaging her husband's feet as he lies in bed, eating the

remains of his meal, and a variety of postures for sexual intercourse (British Library: OR. 11689, OR. 11612; see plates 1-13; cf. Lostly 1980: 14-45; cf. Gaur 1980:23-5). The paintings depicting children and the wife's involvement with them (e.g. plates 10, 11) draw our attention to a curious omission in the *Strīdharmapaddhati*: while Tryambaka assumes that the good wife will produce sons, he not only shows no further interest in them, but makes no allowance for them in her day.

Tryambaka also specifies no time when a woman may simply rest. Indeed, he lists 'sleeping in the daytime' among the six things that corrupt women and which they should therefore avoid (see section IV, p. 275, note 6). Since it is assumed that a woman has no education, it is less surprising that she is not advised to study. Judging by Tryambaka's prohibitions on 'roaming around' and spending time in other people's homes (section IV, p. 275, note 6), we would not expect her to be allowed to visit friends, certainly not on her own. Taken at face value, then, a woman should always be busy about her work. The traditional pattern of an Indian day, however, suggests that the hot period after the midday meal might well be given to rest. It is at this time that women might be encouraged to listen to readings from the epics or *purāṇas*, or even from a work such as the *Strīdharmapaddhati* (Introduction, pp. 22-3 and 232-3).

Before embarking on a discussion of each ruling, it may be instructive to consider at the outset what types of rulings these may be. The crucial question is how each ruling relates to its equivalent for men. The answer takes the form of four quite distinct categories.

First, there are those rulings which, according to Tryambaka, are exactly the same for women as for men. These include the rulings concerning what one may or may not see first thing in the morning (*darśanīyāny adarśanīyāni ca*; section IIA, pp.54-7), urinating and defecating (*mūtrapurīṣotsargah*, section IIA, pp. 69-71), and cleaning the teeth (*dantadhāvanam*; section IIA, pp.78-82). This group of rulings clearly requires the operation of the *ūha* of gender (see section I, pp. 40-3).

Secondly, there are those rulings which are the same in principle for women as for men, but different in detail. For example, the rules on purification (*śaucam*) are applicable to men and women except that for women the colour of the earth used and the number of lumps required is different (section IIA, pp. 71-2). The rules

concerning sipping (*ācamanam*) and bathing (*snānam*) also fall into this category. When a twice-born man sips, the water must touch his heart, throat or palate; when a woman sips, it need only touch her mouth (section IIA, pp. 75–7). A man performs his ritual bath with mantras, a woman without (section IIA, p. 83). Generally speaking, however, both rituals are applicable to women as well as men. Similarly, both men and women must wake early, but the wife should wake before her husband (section IIA, p. 52). Both must eat but the wife should serve her husband and eat only what he leaves (section IIC, pp. 221–7). This is a large group of rulings and the implications are interesting. I shall deal with each in its place.

The third category, a very important one, consists of those rulings in which the wife assists her husband in his ritual obligations (*pativratabhāginī*). In the early morning meditation (*devatādhyānam*), for example, the man must meditate 'with his wife' (section IIA, pp. 52–4). In the fire sacrifice (*agniśuśrūṣā*), although the wife has little to do, she must be present for the ritual to bear fruit (section IIB, pp. 132–41). In the ceremony of paying homage and hospitality to guests (*atithipūjā*), the wife must prepare the food and serve the guest on her husband's behalf (section IIC, pp. 210–14). These rulings indicate the role and status of the wife in the joint ritual duties enjoined upon the married couple. I shall deal with this in some detail in the section on serving the sacred fire (*agniśuśrūṣā*) (section IIB, pp. 107–15).

Finally, there are the duties peculiar to women. These are predominantly rulings concerning housework, such as grinding grain (section IIA, pp. 58–9), cleaning the house (p. 59), smearing it with cow-dung (pp. 59–63), clearing away after the meal (section IIC, pp. 229–33), and so on. As is clear from the parallel timetable, these duties are to be performed when the husband is studying religious literature or working for the family maintenance. They are thus both part of a woman's religious path and her contribution to the family. The parallel with the man's religious duties becomes more apparent in the context of Manu's dictum on marriage for women: a wife serving her husband is like a student serving his teacher; and her household duties are equivalent to her husband's performance of the fire sacrifice (Manu II.67; see section I, p. 35, note 16). Looked at from this point of view, household tasks become part of the powerful *vrata* or religious observance of the wife. Hence the high tone in which these apparently mundane tasks are described.

IIA Before Dawn

(Sdhp. 2v.5–7v.9)

I shall begin by taking, out of sequence, the rulings relating to the time of waking (*prabodhanam*; Sdhp.2v.5–3r.3). As Tryambaka explains, 'both householder and wife should already be awake (i.e. have risen) in the final or sixth division of the night (4.00–6.00 a.m.).'¹ 'According to the *Smṛtiratnāvalī*, it is wrong to be asleep (or in bed) after the *brāhmamuhūrta*: if a married couple stays in bed in the *brāhmamuhūrta*, their house is like a cremation ground, shunned by the (spirits of) the ancestors.'²

Although definitions of *brāhmamuhūrta* differ, the general ruling is constant in *smṛti* literature. Rising before dawn is prescribed for everyone from the Vedic student to the householder (e.g. Manu IV.92; Yājñ.I.115; Gaut.XXIII.21). Kullūka on Manu IV.92 defines *brāhmamuhūrta* as an unspecific pre-dawn period (*kāla-mātravacanah*), so called because of its association with Brāhmī, the goddess Bhārati—a false identification as is evidenced by the alternative name 'the hour of Prajāpati' (*prajāpatye muhūrte*; e.g. Vas.XII.47)—and because it is the time devoted to Vedic recitation. Sm.C.II.p.234 quotes a verse attributed to Pītāmahaḥ defining *brāhmamuhūrta* as the last division of the night (*rātreḥ paścimo yamaḥ*; i.e. 4.30–6.00 a.m.). Par.M.I.i. pp. 219–20 quotes both Manu IV.92 and Yājñ.I.115 cited above, as well as equivalent passages from the *Kūrma*- and *Viṣṇupurāṇas*, and defines *brāhmamuhūrta* as the first of the two *muhūrtas* that make up the *ardhaprahara* or one and a half hour period before dawn (i.e. 4.30–5.15 a.m.) According to Śrīdharasvāmin's commentary on the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, it is the third *muhūrta* before sunrise (*sūryodayāt pūrvam tṛtīye muhūrte*; III.ii.5), i.e. two hours before dawn.

A cycle of legends referred to in the *Brāhmaṇas* explains why one should rise before dawn. According to the *Maitrāyaṇīśaṃhitā* (IV.1.9), the gods sought a scapegoat on whom they might 'wipe

1. *śodhaḥ vibhajya rajanīm caramāṃśe prabodhitāḥ / patnyā saha ...* // Sdhp.2v.8. Cf. note 6.

2. *brāhme muhūrte nidrākaraṇe doṣa uktāḥ smṛtiratnāvalyām // brāhme muhūrte sevetām śayanam yatra dāmpatī / śmaśānatulyam tad veśma pīṭr-bhikṣu parivarjitam // iti* // Sdhp.2v.9–10 (*Smṛtiratnāvalī*) Sm.M.p.209 (*Smṛtiratnāvalī*).